

# 13 **Disabilities and Parking**

This section provides information on disabilities and parking. Laws for parking vehicles and issuing disability parking placards and license plates are intended to allow persons with disabilities easier access when conducting business, shopping, or enjoying the many attractions Michigan offers. All drivers must be aware of Michigan's disability parking laws, which are enforced by local municipalities.

## **License Plates for Individuals with Disabilities**

If you have a disability that significantly limits your ability to walk, or are legally blind, you can obtain a disability license plate at no extra cost. The license plate allows you, or someone driving your vehicle while transporting you, to park in any disability parking space.

A household member may also apply for a disability license plate if he or she is responsible for providing your transportation.

Disability license plates are also issued to facilities serving and transporting persons with disabilities. Disability license plate applications may be printed from the Secretary of State Web site and are available at Secretary of State branch offices. Your physician must certify your disability license plate application.

## **Reduced Fee Registration for Certain Vans**

Under state law, if you use a wheelchair and own a van with a disability license plate, or if someone in your household owns the van and uses it to transport you, then the annual registration fee is reduced 50 percent.

## **Disability Parking Placards**

A disability placard allows you, or someone transporting you, to park in any disability parking space. You may use your placard in any vehicle you are traveling in to park in a disability parking space. Never loan your placard to someone else – the placard is issued in your name for your use only.

The Secretary of State issues two types of disability parking placards. A temporary disability placard is issued for up to six months, usually to people who are temporarily disabled because of injury such as a broken leg, surgery, or a medical condition that is expected to improve. A temporary disability placard may not be renewed when it expires. A new application must be completed before another temporary disability placard can be issued.

A permanent disability placard is issued for four years to people with a disability that is medically not expected to improve. A permanent disability placard may be renewed for an additional four-year period at any Secretary of State branch office. This renewal can be done up to 45 days prior to a placard's expiration. No additional application needs to be completed.

Applications for disability parking placards are available at Secretary of State branch offices, by calling (517) 322-6274 or from the department's Web site. Your physician must complete and sign the application before you submit it to the Secretary of State.

Do not drive with a disability placard hanging from your rearview mirror. This reduces your ability to see clearly. Display the disability placard after parking your vehicle and remove it before driving.

## **Free Parking**

Free parking is offered to persons with severe disabilities and requires the use of a free parking sticker.

A person with a disability must have a valid driver's license to qualify for a free parking sticker.

Free parking at public ramps and parking meters is limited to those people who have the free parking sticker attached to their disability placard.

Free parking is issued only if a physician certifies that the person with a disability lacks the manual dexterity to put coins in a meter, cannot walk more than 20 feet, or cannot access a meter due to use of a wheelchair or other device.

Persons with a disability who qualify for free parking must display a disability placard with the free parking sticker attached. A disability license plate alone does not qualify for free parking.

## Disability Parking Spaces

It is illegal to park in a disability parking space if you do not have a valid disability license plate or parking placard, even if you have a disability. It is also illegal to park in a disability parking space – even with a disability license plate or placard – if none of the occupants in the vehicle have a disability.



## Van Accessible Parking

Van accessible parking spaces are wider than standard parking spaces. This provides space for the van's wheelchair lift and ramp, allowing the person with a disability room to exit and enter the vehicle. For this reason, it is extremely important not to park within the painted area of the van accessible parking space, including the access aisle (painted area on either side of the disability parking space). Doing so may prevent the person with a disability from exiting or entering the vehicle.



Under state law, law enforcement or a governmental agency designated by law enforcement may issue tickets and tow away vehicles of drivers who:

- Park, stop, or stand in a disability parking space.
- Park in a defined access aisle or access lane adjacent to a disability parking space.
- Park in a manner that interferes with a ramp or a curb cut used by persons with disabilities.

## Penalties for Misuse of a Disability License Plate or Parking Placard

Improper use, forging, or copying of a disability license plate or parking placard may result in a fine of up to \$500.

Misuse of a disability license plate or placard deprives a person with a disability the use of a parking space. Not only is this a great inconvenience for people with disabilities, it may prevent them from conducting their business.

## Pregnant Mother Parking Permits

“Pregnant mother” parking permits are issued as a courtesy by businesses and private industry for the convenience of their customers. The Secretary of State **does not** issue these permits. Pregnant mother parking permits are nonbinding and are not recognized under state law.

## Test Your Safe Driving Knowledge What Every Driver Must Know Selected Questions from the Michigan Driver Education Classroom Competency Test (Correct answers may be found on p.127)

1. City driving is more dangerous than expressway driving because of the:
  - a. Lower speed limits.
  - b. Narrower driving lanes.
  - c. Cross traffic and pedestrians.
  - d. Worse road conditions in bad weather.
2. You come to an intersection with a flashing red light. You must:
  - a. Slow down and drive carefully through the intersection.
  - b. Turn either right or left since the road is blocked ahead.
  - c. Stop at the intersection and wait for a flashing green light.
  - d. Stop at the intersection, then proceed as traffic allows.
3. You are driving in the right lane on an expressway. You should probably move into the left lane when:
  - a. Traffic is heavy but moving steadily.
  - b. The weather is bad and roads are slippery.
  - c. Traffic is slow in your lane and cars are in the left lane.
  - d. Traffic is light and cars are merging onto the expressway from the right

4. Before turning left, it is important to:
  - a. Sound your horn.
  - b. Yield to oncoming vehicles.
  - c. Swing to the right side of your lane.
  - d. Wait until oncoming traffic has a red light.
5. When entering an expressway behind several other vehicles, it is MOST important to:
  - a. Keep your eyes on the vehicle in back of you.
  - b. Adjust the position and speed of your vehicle to the flow of traffic.
  - c. Stay as close as possible to the vehicle in front of you.
  - d. Cancel your turn signal.
6. To reduce the effects of headlight glare at night, you should look:
  - a. Straight ahead.
  - b. Over your shoulder.
  - c. At the center of the road.
  - d. To the right edge of the road.
7. You are coming to an intersection with a yellow flashing light. You should:
  - a. Stop and wait for the light to change.
  - b. Make a U-turn; the intersection is closed.
  - c. Drive carefully through the intersection.
  - d. Prepare to stop; the light is about to turn red.
8. When changing lanes, you can check your blind spot by:
  - a. Using the inside rearview mirror.
  - b. Using the outside rearview mirror.
  - c. Using both inside and outside rearview mirrors.
  - d. Turning your head and looking over your shoulder.